

# **GASTROINTESTINAL PARASITES OF CATS**

Gastrointestinal parasitism is a common problem in cats, with prevalence rates as high as 45%.

The parasites can be wormlike:

- Stomach worms
- Roundworms
- Hookworms
- Tapeworms

The signs associated with parasite infection are:

- Dull hair coat coughing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, mucous or bloody feces
- Loss of appetite
- Pale mucous membranes
- Pot-bellied appearance

This signs will be a weakened cat, making it more susceptible to viral and bacterial infections and diseases; this will diminish a good health state. Furthermore, some parasites have the potential of infecting humans.

## **ROUNDWORMS**

- Toxocara leonine*
- Toxocara cati*

Are the most common intestinal parasite of cats in our city (Jeddah) with an prevalence of 25% to 75%, and often higher in kittens. The adult parasite is 3 or 5 inches long, cream-colored and lives in the cat's bowel.

The adult female worm produces fertile eggs that are transferred through the infected cat's feces. The eggs require several days to several weeks to develop into the infective larva stage.

Cats become infected by ingesting eggs or by eating rodents. Kittens are infected by larvae that are passed through an infected queen's milk soon after birth.

This kittens are in serious danger if left untreated.

**DIAGNOSE:** Confirmed by finding parasite eggs in the stool during microscopic examination.

**PREVENTION:** Many medications are effective, but reducing exposure to the feces of infected cats and prohibiting hunting are the best procedure.

**HUMAN INFECTION:** Visceral larval and ocular larval migrans are diseases caused by the migration of *Toxocara* larvae through the tissue of people, particularly children.

It is a must to visit your veterinary clinic when you buy a new kitten and also every three months during the whole life in order to receive the most appropriate deworming treatment.